

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1266

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Development

Title: An act relating to veterinary medicine.

Brief Description: Regulating veterinary medication clerks.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Dyer, R. Johnson, Cooke, Riley, Lisk, Morris, Dellwo and Ballasiotes.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Agriculture & Rural Development, February 2, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Foreman; Karahalios; and Roland.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The practice of veterinary medicine is regulated by state law administered by the Veterinary Board of Governors. The board also sets standards for veterinary medical facilities and for continuing veterinary education. The board prepares and conducts examinations for licensing persons to practice veterinary medicine or specialized veterinary medicine and for certifying persons as animal technicians. Licenses and certificates are issued for the board by the state's Secretary of Health. The secretary determines the fees for such licenses and certificates.

Legend drugs are defined by the state's prescription drug laws as being drugs which may be dispensed on prescription only or which are restricted to use by only physicians and surgeons, podiatrists, veterinarians, registered and licensed practical nurses, optometrists, physician's assistants, and pharmacists and their related licensed institutions, including research institutions. In general, controlled substances are substances other than alcoholic beverages which are subject to abuse and for which

possession is limited to those registered with the state's Board of Pharmacy.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A new category of veterinary assistant is created. It is that of veterinary medication clerk. The performance of the duties of such a clerk is subject to regulation by the Veterinary Board of Governors. A veterinary medication clerk must have successfully completed a training program approved by the Board of Governors.

The fee for issuing a certificate of registration for such a clerk is set by the Secretary of Health. The registration must be renewed annually.

A veterinarian may delegate to such a registered clerk or to a registered animal technician the performance of nondiscretionary functions defined by the Board of Governors for dispensing legend and nonlegend drugs (other than controlled substances) associated with the practice of veterinary medicine. These functions are to be performed while the veterinarian is on the premises and is quickly and easily available. Dispensing of drugs by the clerk or technician must meet the requirements of current law regarding such drugs and is subject to inspection by inspectors of the Board of Pharmacy.

If the veterinarian is not on the premises but has given written or oral instructions, the veterinarian may delegate, to the registered clerk or technician, the delivery of a packaged prescription. Such a delegation may take place only after the veterinarian has physically inspected the packaged prescription for proper formulation, packaging, and labeling.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill corrects a statute reference in the original bill and corrects references that define the controlled substances which are not to be handled by veterinary medication clerks or veterinary assistants.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 27, 1993.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) A strict application of the state's prescription drug laws would require a veterinarian and only a veterinarian to conduct even the clerical aspects of handling prescription drugs. This bill, patterned after program for pharmacists' assistants, would allow clerks and veterinary assistants to conduct some of the more clerical

activities. (2) The bill contains safeguards: the veterinarian is still responsible for the prescription and must physically examine the medication before it is distributed by the clerk or assistant.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Greg Hanon and Dr. Reilly Glore, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association (in favor); Doyle Montgomery, Veterinary Board of Governors (in favor); Jim Robertson, Board of Pharmacy (in favor); and Dr. Robert Mead, State Veterinarian, Department of Agriculture (in favor).